Political problems in Weimar Republic:

**Parties:**

**Pro-Weimar/ Democracy:**

• Social Democrats( centre left)

• German People's Party(centre)

• Center Party (centre)

• German Democratic Party(centre left)

**Anti Weimar**:

• Nazis (right wing)

• Communists (left)

• German National People's Party (right)

• "November Criminals"= they betrayed Germany by signing the treaty of

Versailles.

• Social Democrats held majority

Putsches & Revolts:

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**Spartacist Revolt, January 1919**: the left wing Spartacists led by Rosa Luxembourg and William Liebknecht. They were financed by Bolsheviks in Russia. The putsch was brutally crushed by unemployed soldiers, and Luxembourg and Liebknecht were hung.

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**Kapp Putsch, March 1920**: this right wing revolt was led by General Kapp in an attempt to initiate a military coup. He had many soldiers as his followers, so this revolt was that much more difficult to put down. The government had to halt the revolt with the help of loyal soldiers and street gangs. General Kapp only received a 6 month prison sentence as many were sympathetic to the Right Wing sentiments and they felt it was important to respect social hierarchy.

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**Ruhr Valley incident, January 1923:** Germany was finding it extremely difficult to pay reparations.  Germany was late on several reparations payments as well. As a result, France invaded the Ruhr Valley, Germany’s industrial heart, to get the coal that was due as reparations. As the French occupied the Ruhr Valley, humiliating the Germans, the workers in the Ruhr valley went on strike with the support of the Government. To show their support, the Government printed more money to pay wages to the workers. This only further exacerbated the hyper-inflation.  The French finally pulled out in 1925.

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**The Munich/ Beer Hall Putsch, November 1923:** Hitler and the Nazis attempted to take control of Munich by force. The revolt failed as the army unexpectedly clashed with the SA (the Nazi storm troopers) even though the generals were placed under house arrest in the beer hall.

Decline:

• Great Depression:

Germany depended greatly on American loans (Dawes Plan 1924 and Young Plan 1929). Led to severe unemployment which caused political instability

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Germany 1930 onwards

Monday, 4 March 2013

1:42 PM

Start to see the breakdown of democracy.

In 1930 Hindenburg used article 48 five time, in 1931 he used it 44 times and in 1932 he used it 60 times.  Over the same period the Reichstag met less regularly.  In 1930 the Reichstag met 94 times.  In 1931 it met 41 times and in 1932 it met only 13 times.  This meant that largely because of Hindenburg, democracy in Germany was not working effectively.

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|  | Article 48 | Reichstag Meets |
| 1930 | 5 times | 94 times |
| 1931 | 44 times | 41 times |
| 1932 | 60 times | 13 times |

Had Germany collapsed into dictatorship even before Hitler became Chancellor in 1933?

1930: Wall Street Crash (caused Great Depression), also caused split in government over unemployment/welfare benefits.

 Appointing of Heinrich Bruning as chancellor as beginning of presidential regime begins collapse.

Use of Article 48 frivolous.

Nazis began to gain power, due to desperation

Democratic republic was already dead when Hitler got power.

Amount of Nazi seats in Reichstag continued to grow

Nazis still the **largest party** in Reichstag, but still don't have a **majority** (they had 40% of the vote, but they needed 50% + 1)

1932: Hitler requests Chancellorship - As he did not have the majority vote, Hindenburg was able to reject him.

January 1933: Eventually, Hindenburg relents on advice of Heinrich Bruning, appoints Hitler chancellor.

**Cabinet**

Chancellor: Hitler

Minister for Internal Affairs: Wilhelm Frick

Minister w/o Portfolio + Prussian Minister for Interior: Goring

It had 12 members.  3 Nazis.   Hitler can't control the cabinet.

The other 9 - Previous Cabinet members

Bruning thought he had their support.

**Enabling Act:**

Gave Hitler the ability to decree legislation without reference to Reichstag or the President.  In times of 'emergency' and 'need'.  It also gave him the power to suspend civil liberties.  No checks and balances.

Example of checks and balances (United States):

President is the executive.

Supreme Court

Congress